UN Women: Africa UNiTE in New Push to End Violence against Women

The Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter is consolidating a formidable movement to help fight the rising cases of violence against women and girls in the country. This will be done by contributing to the ongoing development of a Gender-based Violence (GBV) policy, as well as lobbying parliamentarians on the passing of the Marriage Bill currently being debated in Parliament.

Africa UNiTE is the regional component of the UN Secretary General’s global UNiTE campaign to end violence against women, launched on 30 January, 2010 at the African Union Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The UNiTE campaign seeks to build on commitments outlined in the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women as well as the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa among other international instruments.

The Kenya Chapter is made up of over 20 stakeholders representing the civil society, private sector, Government, UN agencies and the media. It is supported by UN Women.

During a planning meeting held in Mombasa on 5 August 2013, the Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter members committed to use a multifaceted approach to end violence against women, through policy formulation, engagement and awareness creation.

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Singing with delight and enthusiasm, a group of women from the Farmer Field and Life Schools (FFLS) welcomes visitors to their farms in Kyuso, Sub-county of Kitui County in the eastern province of Kenya.

This is the reception extended to Mr. Neil Briscoe, UK Ambassador to the three Rome based agencies; FAO, IFAD and WFP, during his recent field trip to Mwingi, to see the joint project addressing gender inequalities in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience building. The purpose of the visit was to show how partnership by the three UN agencies, in collaboration with the Government of Kenya and Action Aid, is benefiting and positively affecting lives of hitherto food insecure households.

Different farmer groups, among them Kithethesyo, Katiliku, and Kaithango, have greatly benefited in terms of enhanced crop and livestock husbandry capacity. The initiative employs the Farmer Field and Life School (FFLS) approach, which is a form of adult education based on the concept that people learn from field observations, testing and discussing the dynamics of small livestock and crop ecosystems from the early development to maturity stage following the seasonal production calendar.

A plan of action has been drawn for Kenya which is an opportunity for Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter members to fast track the conclusions, especially multi-sectoral services, implementation of legal instruments and engaging men and boys in the campaign.

Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter wants to ensure that the national laws are in place and enforced to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls in line with international human rights standards, and that social mobilization engages a diverse range of civil society actors in preventing violence and supporting abused women and girls.

The Chapter also wants to generally to ensure a safe public space for women and girls in Kenya.

Ms. Grace Wangeci of GVRC at the Mombasa meeting. © UN Women, 2013

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facilitators explain and analyse human health and social challenges through analogies with plant and animal problems. “Special group activities encourage learning from peers, hence strengthening communicative skills of participants and encouraging group building,” he said.

Kyuso sub-county, which is situated in a low rainfall area, is characterized by high prevalence of poverty and food insecurity. “This has resulted into frequent resource based conflicts, particularly between the farmers of Mwingi and pastoralists from the neighboring Tana River County”, according to the area Deputy County Commissioner, Mr. Peter Maina. “The conflicts exacerbate food insecurity because they occur in areas considered to be fertile and most appropriate for crop production,” he adds. Mr. Maina observed that activities implemented under the joint project have significantly contributed to enhancing peace in the affected areas.

Ms. Queen Katembu, FAO Kenya Gender Officer says the FFLS approach has promoted gender equality and improved relations among the residents of Kyuso as they have been able to work together towards a common goal of improving food security and nutrition situation of their families and therefore building peace between themselves and within their homes. “The impact has been tremendous as the approach has helped strengthen social re-integration and proved to be a powerful tool for peace building, reconciliation and reconstruction of social cohesion between different ethnic groups,” she confirms.

Among the project sites Mr. Biscoe visited included Katiliku FFLS, which is a group with twenty two members engaged in small scale irrigation and water harvesting. The project has enabled the members to increase vegetable production, leading to improvement of household incomes. Meanwhile, the group members have gained knowledge on use of drip irrigation, terracing for soil conservation, as well as sustainable use of shallow wells to enhance the availability of water for crop production. Although there are few male members, the group is predominantly comprised of women. With growing income, the group notes that they now need financial management training. The members are now able to produce their own food, which is a major contribution to addressing food security.

Asking whether the FFLS programme is benefiting them, they unanimously agree on the importance of sharing the lessons learned with their children for them to gain knowledge at an earlier age. Capacity building and promotion of peer training combined with FFLS activities among local populations have created a spillover effect. “We have become role models to our children,” Ms. Josephine Kyenza, the group leader confidently expresses herself.

In his final remarks, Mr. Briscoe observed that without a doubt, the FFLS initiative is contributing towards poverty reduction, peace building, and food security and promoting gender equality in Kenya. He applauded the successful collaboration between the three agencies and on a lighter note asked them to apply for the next UN Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration award. He urged all the partners to continue being creative, “I am really pleased with what I have seen and for you working as One UN,” he concluded.

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Communities Displaced by Conflict in Moyale Receive Reintegration Support from IOM

Communities that were displaced by inter-clan conflicts in Moyale along the Kenya-Ethiopia border now have improved living conditions, access to water and sanitation facilities and improved health care and well-being, following an intervention by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that started in February 2013 and lasted five months. The IOM has constructed 100 shelters and distributed 500 litre-capacity water tanks for each household.

IOM has also provided support to enhance food production through the distribution of agricultural inputs. 246 families were given seedlings; farm tools were provided for 500 households; while 90 farmers were trained on land preparation, diseases and pest management, post-harvest storage...
Health facilities were improved by stocking five dispensaries with medical supplies and boosting the Kenya Red Cross Society in Moyale with medical provisions for emergency response. Six twin ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines were constructed for both genders and 22 doors repaired in existing VIP latrines. Three additional 10,000 litre-capacity water tanks were installed for improved hygiene.

In December 2011, violence stemming from cyclical inter-communal clashes broke out between warring communities on the Kenyan side dragging up until January 2012. Renewed violence further broke out and continued till March 2012 with the displaced settling along the Kenya-Ethiopian border. On 25 July 2012, inter-communal conflict broke out between the Borana and the Gabra in the Oromia region in Moyale, Ethiopia, leading to the displacement of over 20,000 Ethiopians, who fled to the Kenyan side of the border. The Ethiopians returned home after calm was restored.

As a result of the recurrent conflict on the Kenyan side, more than 580 houses were destroyed, thousands of families displaced, while other thousands sustained injuries. Furthermore, schools and hospitals were vandalized as looting took place in Mansile, Funanyatta, Iladu and Goromuda areas.

The intervention was guided by a joint rapid assessment carried out in August 2012 that identified shelter, food, water, blankets, medicine and sanitation, as priority areas for support. The assessment was carried out by IOM, UNHCR, WFP and supported by World Vision. This project was funded under the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

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Make Every Day a Mandela Day

The UNIC Nairobi Director planting a tree during the commemoration of the Nelson Mandela International Day at Kilimani Primary school © Tirus Wainaina / UNIC, 2013

The United Nations in Kenya has for the last two years collaborated with the South African High Commission to observe the Nelson Mandela International Day.

In 2011, 67 minutes were committed to a Kibera project where staff of the UN and the South African High Commission, together with other local and international partners painted classrooms and dug a foundation for the construction of a new classroom at the Hoywick Educational Children's Centre. Last year, financial resources were donated to purchase treatment kits used by the UN and South African High Commission staff and other partners to treat jigger-infested children at Juja Primary School.

This year the UN Information Centre has again collaborated with the staff of the South African High Commission and other partners to celebrate Nelson Mandela International Day at Kilimani Primary School. The School caters for more than 1100 students, 95% of whom are from low income communities in Kibera and Kawangware informal settlements. The school is also a Special Education Centre for approximately 100 children who are visually and hearing impaired.

By committing 67 minutes of their time during the observance of the Day, the UN and South African High Commission staff rehabilitated an old store-room at the Primary school into a new larger library facility, painted and cleaned its walls and floor. As their contribution, UN staff used their own personal resources to buy and donate story books to the school as per the City Council Education requirements. In addition, fruit trees were planted to make a Mandela Orchard.

This year marks the fourth celebration of the Nelson Mandela International Day under the theme, "Take action, inspire change, and make everyday a Mandela Day". The Day is aimed at mobilizing the public to do more to build a peaceful, sustainable and equitable world. According to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message, "this is the best tribute we can pay to an extraordinary man who embodies the highest values of humanity".
Children with disabilities and their communities would both benefit if society focused on what those children can achieve, rather than what they cannot do, according to UNICEF's annual *State of the World's Children* report.

Concentrating on the abilities and potential of children with disabilities would create benefits for society as a whole, says the report released at the beginning of August 2013.

With this report, UNICEF hopes to add a strong voice and increased visibility to the global, necessary and increasingly urgent debate about disability rights, especially those of children.

*The State of the World’s Children 2013: Children with Disabilities* focuses on the position of children with disabilities in a varying worldwide landscape: how do they fare at home, in school, or at health care centres? What happens to children with disabilities in emergencies or conflict? How do these situations fluctuate around the world? The report asks readers to consider the lost opportunities in denying the full potential of these children.

*The State of the World’s Children 2013* Report argues for inclusive and equitable approaches in such areas as early childhood development, education, health, nutrition, humanitarian response and protection. Based on documented experience and examples, the report recommends ways in which governments, the private sector, international donors and agencies, and other stakeholders can help advance this agenda.

The report gives a voice to children to encourage their position as architects and agents of change in their towns, villages and cities, and to engage in a dialogue leading toward equal treatment of all children, regardless of ability. To this end, in addition to the main narrative and expert technical panels, the report features perspectives or personal essays by policymakers, parents, care providers, celebrities and role models with disabilities and, most significantly, young people with disabilities that have accomplished personal or professional goals or are striving to do so. The hope is that the report will foster greater attention on these children's global needs and remarkable potential.

With the global launch of *The State of the World’s Children 2013 Report: Children with Disabilities*, UNICEF wants to encourage global dialogue and concurrent policy and action. Hence, UNICEF invites all partners and stakeholders to spread the word, develop commentaries, and arrange events related to it. Working together, we can improve the lives of all children.
It’s All about the Youth in Nairobi City

The month of July was a busy month at UN-Habitat and in particular the Urban Legislation, Land and Governance (ULLG) Branch.

The Safer Cities Initiative supported an event held by the Nairobi City County called the Sotokoto marathon held on 7 July 2013 at the Uhuru Gardens in Langata. This marathon brought together youth from different parts of the city and other stakeholders such as the private and public sectors to celebrate fun events in the city. This is crucial for setting the stage for upcoming community activities and cohesiveness within the county.

On the other hand, under the “I’m A City Changer” initiative, there is an ongoing City County Youth week that is to tie into the International Youth Day on 12 August. The ULLG branch is still working with and supporting its partner, the Transition Authority, and at the same time looking for new partners that can contribute to the development and implementation of a County Urban Development Program.

Young runners at the Sotokoto Half Marathon held on 7 July 2013, a part of the Safer Nairobi, Better City - I’m a city changer campaign
© Sokotoko Marathon, 2013

ICAO Helps Develop Contingency Plan for Volcanic Ash Mitigation

Volcanic ash in the atmosphere is a hazard for safe and efficient flight operations. This is mainly because of its physical and chemical composition. Thus, aircraft should avoid, as much as possible, volcanic ash encounters.

The eruption of Iceland’s (Eyjafjallajokull) volcano in 2010 demonstrated the vulnerability of aviation to volcanic eruptions. More than 100,000 flights were cancelled and over a billion dollars in global GDP was lost due to the largest shutdown of European air traffic since World War II. IATA estimated that its airlines alone lost US$1.7 billion due to this single volcanic event.

The risk of such encounters may be mitigated through establishing guidelines

Volcanic ash © ICAO, 2013
and procedures for the provision of information to airlines and en-route aircraft before and during a volcanic eruption.

With the foregoing in mind, the ICAO Eastern and Southern African (ESAF) Regional Office in Nairobi, Kenya, in conjunction with the Western and Central African (WACAF) Regional Office in Dakar, Senegal, held the first meeting of the Africa-Indian Ocean (AFI) Air Traffic Management/Aeronautical Meteorology (AFI ATM/MET) Task Force in Nairobi, from 10 to 11 June, 2013. The main objective of the meeting was to review and update the AFI ATM Volcanic Ash Contingency Plan (VACP) and also to develop the AFI VACP exercises procedures.

The meeting was attended by 16 participants from six States (Cameroon, Congo, Gambia, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda). Also represented was the Agence pour la Sécurité de la Navigation Aérienne en Afrique et à Madagascar (ASECNA).

In order to familiarize all players with the contingency plan, an awareness seminar will be held in 2014 followed shortly after by an exercise to test both the plan’s effectiveness and awareness of the players concerned with their roles as contained in the plan.

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InZone Office Opens at United Nations Headquarters Nairobi

The United Nations Office Nairobi (UNON) on 25 July welcomed an additional office to the complex identified as InZone office.

InZone is a center at the University of Geneva dealing with interpretation. Its key objective is to improve communication in conflict zones by delivering virtual and on-site training to humanitarian interpreters in the field.

According to the InZone Department Director, Professor Barbara Moser-Mercer, the project began as a continued education course for interpreters working in Iraq. It became clear that bringing interpreters to Geneva to train them would not allow the University to reach the numbers operating in conflict zones, and since competence in virtual learning was available a decision was made to design a programme that would allow training of interpreters in conflict zones focusing on humanitarian field interpreters. The first two trainings were delivered to field interpreters working with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC). It was realized that virtual learning alone would not work and through further assessment of the needs a blended approach of virtual learning and training in the field was adopted.

Presently the office covers humanitarian training in conflict zones. The University had to develop ways in which higher learning could be brought to conflict zones. Focus so far has been the horn of Africa. Hence the first office in Nairobi, in collaboration with UNON, following the decision taken last year by its Director-General, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde to host the secretariat of the Pan African Consortium in Interpretation and Translation (PAMCTI) at the UN Headquarters in Nairobi.

The purpose of opening the office in Nairobi “is to reinforce InZone presence in this part of the world where we have been most active and use the presence within the compound of the UN here to create synergies between the realization of humanitarian objectives and the MDGs, and education, for example, to bring our own competence to share with you and to work closely together with you since we believe we all share the same objectives ultimately”, states Professor Barbara Moser-Mercer.

This action underlines the UN’s commitment to the cause of languages and its use for the promotion of peace, security and development.

UN Staff welcomed the move to collaborate, engage and benefit from the new office. Other significant personalities behind the success of this new venture were the Ambassador of Switzerland to Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia and the Seychelles, Mr. Jacques Pitteloud who gave his remarks and endorsed the InZone idea with acknowledgement to the UNON management.

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Professor Moser-Mercer presenting certificates to the interpreters © Moses King’ori / UNON, 2013
Conflict and natural disasters know no linguistic boundaries, and for many organizations operating in the field delivering emergency and humanitarian aid across, language barrier is a major challenge. InZone is committed to training interpreters in the field by leveraging new learning technologies. Interpreters are often recruited because they “know” both the local language/dialect and English, the language of international relief operations, and not because they have been trained as translators or interpreters. Few if any have been trained. Thus they lack both essential professional skills to perform adequately as interpreters, as well as the necessary professional ethics to support crisis management and humanitarian efforts in a stressful environment.

During the opening session, several interpreters who have been working with UNHCR were awarded certificates of attendance for successfully completing the InZone basic course for humanitarian field interpreters in Nairobi, Kakuma, Khartoum, Kabul and Kandahar. The Interpreting Department of FTI (Faculté de traduction et d’interprétation) at the University of Geneva has been actively training field interpreters since 2007 while InZone, its Centre for interpreting in Conflict Zones, was formally set up in December 2010.

It is hoped more staff will be trained and according to Prof. Barbara Moser-Mercer the course should progress from certificates to university degree levels.

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